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P L A Y S

By

BERT FINCK

Author of "Webs"



1902

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PROLOGUE.

ART sat on her throne of white clouds, in the Court of Triumphant Aspiration, surrounded by glittering princes who once were her subjects on earth.

Three muses suddenly entered the assembly, and knelt at the goddess's feet. "A prize!" cried one sweet voice after the other, "for my charge, your truest worshiper below!"

Art quietly silenced the lyrical noise, and spoke to the first kneeling form: "Let me see why it is that he whom you attend deserves so great a reward." She raised her wand and diminished space, and the Earth stood close before her.

"See, see!" exclaimed the muse, in glee, "that town burns with his praise! His name is painted on the walls in streaks of blazing gold! Behold the crowds, and hear the shouts! His work is passing by. And lo! there at the window he stands in all his pride!"

Art did not reply for a moment to the rhapsodies of the first muse. Her eyes were disdainfully scanning the artist's vainglorious face. Her eyes became still more disdainful, as he lifted his hand to his lips and murmured in self-adoration:

"How much I have done for you, O Art!"

Then she laughed, amidst the derision of the entire court, "To boast of what he has done for me?" And the crestfallen muse quit the attendance.

"O how different is mine!" the second muse proudly began; "notice how he sits alone in his rags and misery! Ghosts of hunger and neglect lie against his icy chest; still his trembling fingers clutch his brush and unsold pictures."

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(RECAP)

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Prologue

But a frown was gathering upon the brow of Art, while this muse was so eagerly speaking. The frown became so very deep that darkness fell upon the court when the artist shook his brush, and sighed with the air of a martyr:

"How I have suffered for you, O Art!"

Then she scornfully inquired, "To serve me, and complain?" And the princes of the court drew their swords.

The third muse did not speak at all, but gently pointed to a little room, where an artist was pensively kneeling. Flowers and stones lay scattered about; cold draughts of adversity poured in through a crack; warm zephyrs of dreamland drifted in through another, and they both paid court to his heart. But one hand of the artist picked up a stone, and the other one clasped a flower. He pressed them both against his breast, and smiled at the zephyrs and then at the draughts.

"I thank you, O Art," he tenderly said, "help me to be worthy of these!" A brilliant glow spread through the court, and the air sang with the applause of the princes, as Art descended from her throne and clasped the third muse by the hand.

"You have only to name the prize," she said, "for your charge, my truest worshiper below."

SOLDERO.

A HEART'S TRAGEDY.

CHARACTERS.

KORONIE, The Queen.	ELOUARD, A poet.
SOLDERO, Her favorite.	FLORIANA, His love.
ILDEANA, A Lady of the Court.	The Queen's attendants.

SCENE: *A road along the foot of a hill. The Castle of SOLDERO in the distance. Enter, on the hill above the road, SOLDERO.*

SOLDERO. The battle's won; could it be called a battle! The truth in me has triumphed by the aid of certainty. Let the queen rage and strike me with her power; she cannot hurt me as my Floriana could; with all her court and armies, not as Floriana could! When that chaste maid disdained me, as I fearfully thought she did, I was crushed, and I was banished, even while honored as never before; the queen's gifts seemed then hag's gifts, and the crown an idle weight.

I just begin to live—I know myself; I know I love, and that my love's returned. I have been living in a tomb; 'tis true, a glittering, gorgeous tomb, but still a tomb—a tomb. A morbid restlessness came over me while there; I craved a high-niched jewel in this brilliant cell of death. To reach it I had but to faintly knock at the guarded heart of the mistress of the cell, where a ladder would be handed me on which to climb—jewel, cell, and mistress then to be all mine. But while I started several times to softly rap—the door already unbarred as I drew near—I beheld without, through a slight crevice in my prison wall, an angel's face of liberty and love; and then I could not rap. I turned and watched the crevice and the face which came and went again, yet

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never smiled at me. The battle then began: to grasp the jewel, leave the passing angel with the face that dazzled my rich gloom—forget the image of seraphic life which floated by without a look at me, or else break from the tomb and follow it, unmindful whether it would smile at me or no, only to breathe its divine atmosphere.

In the height of this struggle that waged in my breast, the question which stirred it was decided for me; the angel re-appeared and called to me. So away from the homage of court, gaudy rubbish! Away from ambition, the unrest of ghosts! The queen's love is fever; the throne, solitude; loud cheers for the sovereign mean beggars are near. The tinsel rags of royalty, the bended knee of envy and of spite, the herds of echoing slaves, the carefully carved words, tempt me no more; for in the guiding starlight of pure love, that leads me up to spheres of clearest sight, I see they are but fetters, though studded with gems. I will surely meet her here; she often walks this way to pick wild flowers; and so does Elouard, my only friend—but what a friend! The noblest soul among all men is he, the poet Elouard. I have been blessed in friendship as in love. Could I but see him now and tell him of my happiness, how he would laugh at first, and say, "What! the old stony heart that cared for only power, touched by love! Just like a good-for-nothing poet, after all!" But he would quickly change his tone of honest raillery and offer me his tenderest congratulations, and feel as glad as though it were himself favored by the gods of supreme joy. He will leave the country with me; a poet's home is his affections; he can be happy anywhere when in the midst of sympathy.

I laugh at Koronie's fury and at her mouldy passions; let her proclaim me traitor and issue bitter writs of banishment. With love and friendship at my side I can create a kingdom of my own; a kingdom? more than that—a world, a universe of my own. (*He descends the path leading down to the road.*)

Soldero

Enter FLORIANA, gathering flowers along the way and thrusting them into her hair.

FLORIANA (*singing*).

There's hope in the heavens;
There's peace in the air;
There's love in the flowers;
And God everywhere!

O, life's sweet as music
When hearts simply dare
To trust in the angels
And throw away care!

SOLDERO (*aside*). The battle is decided, without doubt; victory comes herself to deck my brow with laurel leaves. This is the richest moment of my life. I ask for nothing, Heaven, but to be a little worthy of this sublime gift, and that I may be able to make her happy—happy as she makes me. That voice—each tone is worth more than all the clinking sounds of majesty, or of triumphant swords. How well those flowers become her! I have seen women—not a few of them—the flowers in whose hair seemed to shrink into themselves, as though ashamed of nestling there; but hers look honored by their contact, and sparkle with the radiance of her chastity; the very hills reflect the soft light of her soul. Her presence casts a spell of holy witchery over all; I almost fear to speak, lest the charmed scene be disturbed; it seems too weirdly beautiful to be real.

FLORIANA (*seating herself on a rock and musing aloud*). And I will throw away care, for care is wicked. God, who gave this precious love, will help us to protect it; all will be well, one day. Only my heart shrinks from concealment; it seems not right that love should be concealed; why not loudly proclaim it to all the world—a sacred bliss to gladden even nature and to draw down the spirits of the sky to witness

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it? Still, Elouard says the queen has many moods, and very often strange ones; moods when she frowns on lovers and tears them from each other. He thinks it wise to wait for a kind hour, when she is generous—which means, when she is happy, the poor queen!—for then she grants every request; delights in giving others pleasure.

He says such a mood, he knows, is very near at hand, and then he will tell her of our love and beg her favor on our speedy marriage. Until that time we must be patient—hide our sweet love, lest it prove fatal.

It hurts me most of all to think that our secret must be kept from Soldero; it seems almost like treason to do so, for Soldero is Elouard's faithful friend, who would help us with his sympathy, advice, strength, even life.

But that is why he should never know, Elouard explains; for Soldero has almost reached his goal; and shall his friend, to whom he has been so true, turn barrier to his triumph that is so near?

The queen no longer can delay her marriage; the delegates of the people again urge her to take a spouse, to reign joint sovereign with her. She, fearing to offend her subjects further, swears at a month's end she will give them a king. And this king will be Soldero, of course, unless he loses her favor.

Such loss to him might possibly occur were our love offensive to the queen, and he connected with it. I know that all of this is very true; that Soldero's ambition is his soul—ambition, and friendship for Elouard, but for none else, and that this friendship must not be his doom.

Yet, O, I could not help it. Elouard will grieve, I'm sure. I could not help but tell him, as I did, a day ago, when I met him by the chapel, no one near. He looked so very open in his joy when I came up to him; almost like Elouard in boyish recklessness; there's something of the poet in him, too, only the poet is stifled by the musty air of court.

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But I could get no further than with "Soldero, I love—" when I heard a stealthy footstep, and the rustle of a gown, and Lady Ildeana crept by, she whom Elouard calls "The Serpent of the Court."

For Soldero disdained her, I believe; how could he love a wicked heart like hers? And she knows nothing of the word "forgive"; breathes but to thwart our Soldero's hopes and plans. I acted very foolishly again; I always do; but Elouard says he loves me best for that. I thought only of danger being near—danger for Soldero, and ran away. I am glad I did not finish with my words, and yet, perhaps I have done more mischief still by vanishing so guiltily.

Well, I am not a lady of the court and can not wear a secret gracefully. Poor Soldero! I hope he will win his crown, if a crown can give him pleasure; it would give misery to me, and to Elouard too. We could not wander, with crowns upon our heads, over hills and fields like thoughtless vagabonds, unmindful where we go; for crowns check freedom. Poor Soldero! I hope that I have done no harm; I am so imprudent! Talking here aloud! Ildeana may have been listening all this time, and may be now upon her snaky way to the queen to ruin him. I wish that Elouard were here, so I could tell him of my folly. He could warn Soldero in time to save himself. It seems so strange that love, which God gives us, should be concealed. (*Rising and walking slowly down the road until she is out of sight.*)

SOLDERO (*descending the path*). O fool! fool! fool! fool! fool! to dream of playing poet and be loved! You that were born for tragedy alone—the tragedy of ambition and ascent! As though you could escape it, fool! fool! fool! Why, Elouard never dreamed so wild a dream as you! Elouard, with all his poetic fancies, no such dream as you! To dream of being happy and beloved! That is all for Elouard—freedom, love, peace, hope! You have the crown

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in place of them—the crown, ha, ha, ha, ha! But crown of what? For Elouard owns the world, and even if he would he could not give you part of it to rule, except the marshy lands of pity—woman's pity. Your title to be thus, perhaps, "Soldero, King of Woman's Pitying Tears." O no, no, no! The one she aptly gave you is much better, "Poor Soldero!" Poor Joke-of-Dreams! Poor poet of a mocking hour! Poor dupe of impish voices! Or, in good, plain, and honest words, poor fool, poor fool! fool! fool!

(*Enter ELOUARD, riding hurriedly.*)

Ah, here he comes, this mighty sovereign! But why in such a hurry? His kingdom's surely safe. He's in almost such a hurry as poor Soldero once was, when he thought to claim a world and found it gone.

ELOUARD (*excitedly*). It is well that I have found you; there is little time to lose. Up, up on my horse and away! (*dismounting*) for the queen's in a wild humor with your absence of three days. Your foes have not been idle. Ildeana has worked her tongue about meeting you with a woman, near the chapel, murmuring love, and they come, the queen and your enemies, this way! Soldero, I know you can defeat them in a moment, if you will, but you need some preparation, and you do not look so calm as you should be at such a time; do not let them see you now. Quick! quick, they will soon be here!

SOLDERO (*bowing profoundly*). I am your loyal and obedient servant, but will your majesty pardon my bold tongue if it suggests the honor is too weighty—that of riding my imperial sovereign's horse?

ELOUARD. There is no time for mockery or jokes! I know there is no stouter breast, no shrewder mind, or quicker tongue than yours in all the world; but, Soldero, I would not have them triumph for a moment over you. Why, it would add even more than fifty years to Ildeana's hissing

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life to see you humbled in the eyes of the court; to see you frowned upon by her who, but a day or two ago, almost declared you spouse and sovereign. For honor's sake, throw aside your pride, my friend, and keep away from them, if only for an hour!

SOLDERO. Your majesty would banish me? How has poor Soldero offended you? Where must he go? To what far hemisphere, to rest outside of Elouard's boundless empire?

ELOUARD. But this is madness, Soldero! (*Aside.*) Upon my soul, I fear he has gone mad! Ambition can upset the strongest intellect. (*Aloud.*) Soldero, can you not understand? 'Tis Elouard, your friend, who urges you to save yourself from a humiliation sharper than wounds of all the swords in Christendom.

SOLDERO. Then I am to be banished for my madness? But that should have been done some time ago, for I am as sane now, saner, King, than ever, and recognize my poverty and your might.

ELOUARD. Mighty in happiness, Soldero, of your friendship; and for that friendship's sake, listen to me: do not disdain the counsel of your wisdom—leave foolish pride to weaklings—flee from here!

SOLDERO. Mighty in claiming love of a pure woman, King Elouard, would you leave this kingdom out?

ELOUARD. Soldero, forgive. I understand your meaning, my secret is discovered by my friend from whom, for his sake, not for mine, I hid it lest it bring ruin on his almost sceptered reach.

SOLDERO. As though I did not always know your secret! But you have done wrong. I could have blessed your joy when I was still a toy of royal fancy. How could I stand poorer than I do now?

ELOUARD. You still have liberty and no humiliation. A man is rich as long as he has those; and if you are not mad

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you will not lose them, but leave, whatever voice of stubbornness may say.

SOLDERO (*suddenly*). And leave all my possessions to my friends and foes? My power to these, my hopes to those? Well, I do not begrudge my friends their spoils, but I'll die sword in hand, resisting a pillage by my enemies.

(*The queen and her party are heard approaching.*)

ELOUARD. It is too late for you to avoid them now. I pray your tongue may yet outwit their malice! But since you will unprepared give battle, let them fight two instead of one.

(*Enter FLORIANA quickly.*)

FLORIANA. Let them fight thee! Elouard, forgive! I am the cause of all this trouble; I was telling Lord Soldero of our love when I heard Ildeana and fled.

ELOUARD. So you were the girl that he met by the chapel? The girl who disappeared when the serpent appeared? My poor Floriana, our secret is now out; we must give it to the queen and save Soldero. You are wiser by far than I, sweetheart philosopher! It was wrong to conceal our love from our good friend, who knew of it always—did you not, Soldero? Had we opened our hearts to him much might have been spared.

SOLDERO. Yes, he knew of it always! Yes, much might have been spared! (*Aside.*) The battle is ended forever, forever! Dreams against reality; reality wins! The dream forces are routed, are scattered and slain, and Soldero's fate is decided. (*Aloud.*) My friends, I will be frank with you; I have had a touch of madness which comes to all at times, but I have learned to master it, and I am sane again, saner than I have ever been, and thus more powerful. Stand close to me, you happy pair of lovers, and you will shortly see that you have lost nothing by your loyalty, in spite of all my madness and my foes.

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Enter queen and party, in riding costumes. The queen looks disdainfully before her, and ILDEANA, just behind her, smiles triumphantly at SOLDERO.

SOLDERO (*springing forward*). Treason! treason! treason! You are beset by traitors, royal madam! Infamous plots are hatching in your midst against the sacred welfare of your scepter! Forbear to move until these plots are shattered. (*He thrusts his sword between the queen and ILDEANA.*) Back! back, you nest of mischief-brewing serpents! You have hissed too soon; staffs are at hand to crush you!

KORONIE (*coldly*). That treason is near us we are well aware, but we did not deem it would loudly proclaim itself, or dare to oppose our passage!

SOLDERO. And it has not boldly proclaimed itself, nor has it stopped your perilous passage. It sits with flattering smile and docile mien about you, madam, and smooths your way to peril and disaster. No! courteous treason will not stay your passage; that is the part of rude fidelity!

KORONIE. We see no loyalty that stops us now, but faithlessness which gives us inconvenience.

SOLDERO. If this be faithlessness, then let fidelity die, since it no longer has a home to nestle in. But before it dies it must offend again, by thrusting unctuous craftiness away from you. Retire, and air your closeted bitter tongues; (*to the queen's attendants*) the queen would be alone to hear of dangers that menace her throne.

(He leads the queen away.)

KORONIE. This is a jest to make even stoics laugh! That Soldero should warn the throne of danger! Its safety is so dear to him that he plays, far away, with moods that do not foster the good morals of the land.

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SOLDERO. Deception always curls itself near us, ready at any moment to spring; sincerity stands at a distance, on a hilltop, guarding our interest with clearer view. And if bright dreams corrupt a nation's morals, the moods that are my comrades are most impure indeed.

ILDEANA (*advancing*). Your majesty will pardon my seemingly forward tongue, but this may be a clever scheme to lure you from protection.

KORONIE (*aside*). Could I but think he cared to carry me away! (*Aloud.*) Your tongue's as strange as it is bold, my lady Ildeana. Koronie to know fear! You are at liberty to seek dangers a little while among these hills and let us hear of dreams that take the shape of women. (ILDEANA *retires.*)

SOLDERO. Of woman, yes; dreams ever of one woman, but it is not of that dream I now can speak, but of a boon which I pray you grant me, madam, before I meet the punishment dealt by my loss of favor.

KORONIE. There was a Soldero once who only had to breathe a wish and that wish would be granted, for this was due his services unto a grateful queen. But he, it seems, has lately passed away, and one who bears his name is but a mockery of him. Still, for the sake of that old once-loved name, he that ungracefully bears it need not utter his request in vain.

SOLDERO. It is to make not me, but others, happy. I have a friend, rich with the gold of a true poet's soul, who loves a gentle girl. But he is as tenderly considerate as he is great in song, and fearing to disturb the soft air of my dream—my haunting dream, lit by a woman's face—he checked his natural impulse to share with me his bliss, which needed the smile of his sovereign before it could be called complete. Not so with her, the dove-like maiden of his heart; it seemed dishonest to her saintly reasoning to hide the rarest and most envied gift that heaven bestows on

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mortals. And thus, one evening, as I whispered to a vision, this girl passed by the chapel door and gently cried "Soldero, I love," but before she had spoken the name of her lover she was frightened by—a snake. For love, my queen, is as timid as it is daring, at times, and from the creeping presence of malice, why, even an angel would fly.

KORONIE. This girl—where is this girl?

SOLDERO. Your interest gives me hope for the peace of my friends. I see they still are here, Elouard and Floriana. I was chiding them when you appeared, for their not having confided in me when it was in my power to intercede for them. I trust it is not yet too late, and that your generous majesty will not darken the dawn of their paradise because of their friendship for me.

KORONIE (*advancing quickly to ELOUARD and FLORIANA*). Girl, where was it that you spoke to the Lord Soldero of your love?

FLORIANA. Of my love for Elouard?—by the chapel. I am so thoughtless, pardon me, your majesty. I meant no wrong to any one at all.

KORONIE. Your only wrong, my dear, lay in not coming to your queen and sharing with her the secret of your love. What, is she then so terrible that lambs like you must shrink from her? Here, Elouard, you can sing no poem such as this. (*Placing ELOUARD's hand in FLORIANA's.*) Take care of her, for I am her protector still, even after you may call her wife, which must be very soon. (*The lovers are about to sink on their knees before her, but she, arresting them, kisses FLORIANA with "God bless you both, and make you happy forever!" She then returns to SOLDERO, who stands in a musing attitude.*)

KORONIE. Your boon is granted—could it be called a boon—it was a gift to me, this precious opportunity.

SOLDERO. I thank you, madam; from my heart, I thank you. I, who no longer can be happy, since my one dream

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is broken—broken—may find some hours of gentle reverie in the knowledge of the happiness of my friends. Now, of these dangers that harass your throne, if you will hear them from an accused traitor's lips.

KORONIE. First tell me of this dream, this one, one woman-dream which now, you say, is broken and leaves for you no happiness more.

SOLDERO. My only treason—if it be treason—lies in my dreams.

KORONIE. We can forgive a dreamer much, for we have also dreamed. (*Aside.*) 'Tis not his dreams, but his lack of dreams, that I have lately dreaded.

SOLDERO. (*Pointing toward the queen's attendants, a little way off, who are watching his interview with KORONIE with ill-concealed anxiety.*)

But they are traitors, not in dreams but in actions; they, knowing of the dream that tortured me—the dream that drove me from my sovereign's presence lest it take fire and burn me in her sight—basely maligned it; used it for their venom; sought to deprive the throne of its most steadfast guard. Nay, more than this; they aimed at murder, for it means death unto this guard to see his dream-face frown on him.

KORONIE (*eagerly*). This dream-face then is whose?

SOLDERO. Here is the treason of my soul; forgive it, Heaven, if thou canst! The face which tantalized my brain—which gave me day, which gave me night, which sent me from you, drew me back—this face, O Queen, is yours! And here is still greater treason of my soul; forgive it, Heaven! Forgive it, Queen! That face in vision smiled into mine, not as a sovereign on a devoted subject, but even as Floriana's illumines Elouard's. And now *that* dream has faded, faded! How dreams do strengthen and inflate our breasts with health, with hope and daring courage!

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But when they are gone all the earth seems barren and our vitality vanished. I have confessed my treason to my queen, and whatever chastisement she chooses to inflict on me can not be greater than the one which I have already received—my dream-world ravished from me.

ILDEANA (*advancing rapidly*). Your majesty, loud rumors are afloat of insurrections led by a lord high-seated in the court.

SOLDERO (*aside*). The snake's last hiss! Would I could wish that it had taken effect.

KORONIE. We were just about to call you to inform you of the news. The treason has been discovered and the traitor has confessed. Here, Elouard, leave your bride a moment; call my attendants to me, so they may hear the sentence passed by their queen on treachery.

SOLDERO (*aside*). To play a part into which you put your heart is great indeed; but to triumph in a part without a heart to put into it is surely greater still!

KORONIE (*to her attendants who eagerly reply to her summons*). Behold this wretch, who dared to love his queen! For such high treason she will punish him by depriving him of liberty forever; she herself to be his jailer. And as an added punishment for his crime she will press his head down with the heaviness of a crown. Salute your king! My lady Ildeana, you have been so actively engaged in scenting out this treason that you surely must be weary and, for your health's sake, we bid you to return unto your father's castle and tell him that the queen commands him to take his daughter traveling. And you, my lord of Baldico, who were strenuously employed in this same business, you had better travel, also, for your health's sake. I will bestow a great favor upon you, my lord of Firman; you were so greatly troubled about Lord Soldero's conspiracies that it must be a pleasure to you to trumpet the traitor's doom. Inform the people of the neighborhood that their queen

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grants their request even before the two weeks have been ended—that Soldero is their king. As for you, my lady Kashiru—and you—and you—

(While she continues speaking in the same mocking vein to her alarmed attendants ELOUARD and FLORIANA approach SOLDERO.)

ELOUARD. Your ambition then has triumphed, Soldero; you have won the crown. *(Clasping SOLDERO's hand.)*

SOLDERO. Yes, it has triumphed. *(After a pause.)* But what of that? The crown is nothing to me. 'Twas not the crown that worried me, that turned me mad and forced me to greet you strangely, Elouard, a while ago; it was—the world will not believe it but you will, my friend, you will believe it—it was because I loved the queen for her own self and feared she did not understand my love, but thought I aimed at sovereignty alone. I find I was mistaken, and my troublesome ghost has been laid.

ELOUARD. How glad I am to hear this, Soldero! There is no shadow on my happiness now at all. Hear! Hear! He loves her, Floriana! *(Kissing FLORIANA.)*

FLORIANA. Forgive me, Soldero! How I misjudged you! And we will all be happy now, so happy!

SOLDERO. Yes, we will all be happy now—so happy!

ELOUARD. After all, there is nothing that can take the place of love, is there, Soldero?

SOLDERO. No, there is nothing that can take the place of love, Elouard—Floriana.

(The queen joins them; her attendants have all disappeared.)

KORONIE. How gloriously the sun is setting! And hear that bird's rhapsodic song! The very winds seem to be wooing, and the leaves are whispering affectionate words! Come, love makes poets of us all. Let us stroll toward

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King Soldero's castle, where we will sup and speak what is in our hearts. You are not coming, Soldero?

SOLDERO. I lost a jewel. I will follow you on Elouard's horse in just a moment.

(The queen, with her arm about FLORIANA's waist and ELOUARD at her side, ascends the hill. SOLDERO stoops as though looking for something and when they are out of sight he kneels before the stone on which FLORIANA sat, soliloquizing.)

Here is where Soldero died! And they will bury him soon in a tomb of gold, with all the hollow pageantry of death.

(As he arises from his knees a nun passes by.) Sister, a life has just now passed away; pray for this departed soul.

(He moves toward ELOUARD's horse, but stops on hearing jubilant shouts of "A King!—A King! Our SOLDERO is our King! SOLDERO and KORONIE! Long live SOLDERO, our King!") The dirge!

KIOWANA.

A TRAGEDY IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

KIOWANA, Priestess of Hell.
GLUKO, Her Attendant.
YAJEHO, Her Dwarf.
SYLVADOR, A Jealous Lover.

Spirits of { RODERIC } Her attendants
 { and } before GLUKO.
 { ELDERO, }

YAJECHIN, A Baboon.
Elementary Spirit Voices.

ACT I.

A room of rotunda-like form, the walls of which are covered with heavy black velvet. A solitary light shows KIOWANA, clad in a scarlet robe, with a purple flower in her yellow hair, sitting on a raised seat. At her feet squats the dwarf, YAJEHO, grotesquely attired, twisting the tail of YAJECHIN, the baboon.

YAJEHO (*muttering*). An owl rode on a he-goat's back to visit the sisters of Satan. Oh, that is what a frog told me as he sat on a lily-pad, dreaming!

BABOON. Umph-humph! Umph-humph! Umph-humph!

KIOWANA. Cease your chattering jargon! Let the baboon go! Call Gluko at once! Begone!

(*Enter GLUKO, swinging a whip.*)

GLUKO (*striking the dwarf and baboon.*) Yajeho and Yajechin, ape and baboon! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Brew the Devil's broth for the Devil's Hour! Kiowana is hungry for the feast!

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(YAJEHO and the baboon run from the room, screaming.)

KIOWANA. Gluko, you drunken clown, take care! My patience with your presumption must soon have an end; how dare you strike my beasts? Beware, beware of my tired mood!

GLUKO. Kiowana, enchantress of Gluko's thoughts, your slightest frown shivers his heart! (*He kisses, with mocking grace, her hand.*)

KIOWANA. Has Sylvador come?

GLUKO. Is a fool ever wanting when folly is near?

KIOWANA. Not while the sot Gluko lives!

GLUKO. Rail not against your work, Kiowana, you have besotted him. Yes, Sylvador is here—a greater fool than Gluko, since vengeance is his motive.

KIOWANA. Then bring this wonder in.

GLUKO. Kiowana, Empress of Black Art, hail! High-Priestess of the spells of Hell! Dispenser of the souls of men! Gluko brings you your master—pardon—your slave! (*Aside.*) She calls me a drunken clown, but I am neither too drunk nor too stupid to fathom the drift of her wiles. (*Gluko saunters, carelessly laughing, into the hall.*)

KIOWANA. Madman! You rush on to your doom! O, weary companions are folly and fraud! After to-night I am through with you all; a new life begins with new love! Sylvador! Sylvador, you have awakened me! Sylvador! Sylvador, crown of my destiny! Lo! from the depths of my infernal reverie I spring to your breast and ascend! Hear me, you serpentine creatures of chaos! Imps that controlled me before I was born! I have been faithful to my lonely mission—at the altar of magic I sacrificed fools. Now is the time to reward me, sweet demons! The favor I crave is not hard to bestow; yet why should I name it? You know all my feelings—you know that I love him, this hot Sylvador! He seeks, in his passion, my occult

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assistance to tear from his rival the girl both adore; he soon will be here—the mad Gluko prepares him; help me to crush his love for her who spurns him, and to lure him into my warm arms. (*A diabolical laugh is heard.*) It is not true that you laugh at me, devils! Do you believe that my senses are gone in that I would give up my richly-paid living for the sake of a stranger whose rage masters me? O, you forget that with all her weird powers, your priestess is human! She needs more than gold! The gold that you gave her for banning and tricks; her name which strikes terror; her palace, a queen's, alone in the wood here, where sorrow and spite are turned into victims of fever and, duped, make but a dull shadow of true recompense for service to unholy spirits. Love is the only return you can give her—love, the ambrosia that tempts gods and men to struggle, to battle, to kneel, and to lie for; the price is not high for the work she has done! (*Another laugh is heard.*) Ha, ha, I laugh with you! The jest were upon me did I once consider frail coquetries love. No, you have not paid me, My flirtatious dealings with Roderic, Eldero, Gluko, the beast, were trivial games to preserve my brain's forces from weariness born of contempt for mankind. (*The laughter continues; she springs from her seat.*) You think Sylvador is another toy merely for my fancy to sport with? O, listen! Not one of these troublesome water-pates caused me to tremble, except with impatience—to love is to fear. But how my frame quivered beneath this man's wrath-flame! He did not entreat, but commanded my aid, as though it were due him, and I proud to serve him. I recognized love when it came like a storm. (*The laughter increases; she closes the door.*) If he hears this derision my power is gone. So this is the way that the devils pay wages—to mock when the time comes to settle accounts. I had all the fire that a mortal can burn with; how often death danced in my heart! And when I would bury those torturous hours in joys to

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which I have just claim, they, who owe it to me for infamous labors, reply to my yearning with jeers. (*The laughter grows louder and wilder, and murmuring voices are heard.*) Well, I have enough of your contemptuous laughter; I leave you forever with your debts unpaid. (*She picks up a wand by the raised seat and breaks it.*) I renounce all my charms that are wielded by you; but I still have some charms of my own. (*Even while she tries vainly to open the door the flickering light is extinguished by invisible hands and chaotic sounds stir the air.*) In what hideous way do you hope to restrain me? This hissing and swishing means malice is near! (*The blackness turns into deep blue; two shadowy forms stand before the raised seat.*)

FIRST SHADOW. Return to your throne. What you sue for is granted.

KIOWANA. How foolish it was to have doubted your favor, Satanic protectors! I meant no offense. You can not be angry with rage—it is evil; and if love sounds too gentle, call my passion lust. (*The notes of a trumpet pierce through the closed door.*) The trumpet of Gluko! Being drunk he blows well. The Devil's Hour-service begins. You will not desert me? I had no intention, even in my ill humor, of serving your foes; white angels of heaven will not flutter near me, for the breath of my schemes would soon blacken their wings. Before night is over the irksome antics of Gluko will be ended forever by poison or sword, as I did rid my bored self of like playthings before him—Roderic and Eldero, when they amused me no more. Is not this a dish for you, fiends? And when I have captured the prey of my bosom—the prize you award for condemned industry—even while I am feasting I shall not be idle, for each morsel I swallow pays tribute to sin. (*The trumpet sounds again, nearer.*) Another blast of the trumpet; scorned and scorner approach; the one to his death, the other to

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my breast, and, coming to love me, he comes to love hell. Mischief enough for a woman to do! The devils should give me their blessing.

SECOND SHADOW. We promise assistance. You shall have your reward!

ACT II.

THE SAME AS ACT I.

The solitary light as before. Opposite the raised seat, against the wall, the two shadowy figures stand rigidly. KIWANA, on the dais, looks alternately at them and toward the door.

KIWANA. They never appeared thus before. Their voices seem strangely familiar, and yet, not as spirits, but mortals, whom I have once very well known. I wish that this night of capricious fate were over and my dangerous spells ended forever. Did they only not stare at me so; or, since they must ceaselessly stare, did their faces not continually change, as clouds, now threatening with black, and now with livid hue, but always rolling, rolling.

Courage, Kiwana, courage! you who have dared to bargain with the abysmal shadows need never tremble more. The limit is reached when flesh communes with space; flesh then becomes the master. Down, down, unreal fear! (*Two strokes of a bell float through the deep air.*) The Devil's Hour is come, and love and death are at the door! I must be calm to greet them.

(Enter GLUKO, fantastically dressed in green, with a trumpet in one hand and a goblet in the other, accompanied by SYLVADOR in a flowing red robe, with coronet and staff. Followed by YAJEHO, leading the baboon, which is costumed in the habit of a monk.)

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SYLVADOR (*advancing angrily to KIWANA*). This tinselled mummer, priestess, no doubt befits your dupes but, unless your powers are dull, you must know I am none of these. I demand of you merely, Kiwana, to do what I myself could do were it not for my heated temper which disturbs the charms held by each strong mind. You, having no interest whatever in passions that agitate, can steadily wield your native magic to bless or to curse as you will. No buffoonery is needed to accomplish that which requires but a self-possessed mood; since I am acquainted with the secret of your spells, why am I treated as a fool?

YAJEHO (*Lying on his back on the floor, with the baboon between his crooked legs, at KIWANA's feet*).

Oh, I thought I would break my jaws laughing! Gray Night-mare, the witch's cat, singed his blue whiskers while his mistress was frying bat-liver. Crying, "Curse you! curse you! curse you!" he clawed out her yellow eyes; so now she has only two bleeding holes to ogle the Devil with!

BABOON. Umph-humph! Umph-humph! Umph-humph.

KIWANA. Jabbering air, remember the whip! (*Aside*.) He says all this in the presence of these starers! (*Aloud*.) Do you not see those awful shadows there? They come directly from the spirit-world to aid my uncanny practice.

SYLVADOR. I see more idle jugglery; and even were they beings of another sphere, they would as readily come to me as to you, did I yield myself up to them. There is nothing that I fear in flesh or air except to be balked of my purpose, and that shall never happen while I live.

KIWANA (*aside*). How little do they know who boast! The delusions of the conceited are sweet! Yet it is the magnetism of his conceit which makes me love him so. (*Aloud*.) You speak shrewdly, Sylvador; still, keep your vestments on, since what we are robed in often checks or loosens our flow of talent. Now, do not you, who easily

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wins a way into the coldest female heart, feel lighter in your grace when clad in gallant garb?

SYLVADOR. Lighter, perhaps, had I no clothing on at all. No finery can smooth the tongue that captures men's and women's eyes; no rags can stop a fiery hand from thrusting its sword into a rival's breast!

KIOWANA. Pray, why not use that sword?

SYLVADOR. Why, if I used it, would his corpse cause her to even clasp my hand? His blood, which I so itch to spill, would flow in triumph over me and fill her bosom with still deeper love for him; for she is no unnatural woman, whose fidelity death can chill. Therefore, I come to you. Since love is all enchantment, weird spells alone can deal with it. He won her lips through witchery, else why should she care for him? He is a student, merely, and, unlike me, not of noble birth.

GLUKO (*standing against the wall, near the door, beside a small table, on which he rests his goblet, when not raising it to his lips*). (*Aside.*) He thinks himself so wise, and yet he talks as though love had aught to do with lack of brains or station! Kiowana has fondled sovereigns, imbeciles, and slaves; she once even petted me, the only wise fool in the room, for I have sense enough to know that all is folly in this world—but drink. What do those shadows here? Kiowana must be weak, indeed, from love, since her fiend-masters appear themselves to strengthen her conjuring mischief. Well, let us see how the play ends; curiosity and drink save life from being a bore.

SYLVADOR. The hour you call the Devil's has almost passed. I came to see you several nights ago, for the purpose I explained. You could have done the work as easily then—I had the fee at hand—as now; but even priestesses, it seems, must be perverse. My troublesome rides through these deceiving woods are hardly less agreeable than this absurd regalia and delay, or company of a sot.

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GLUKO (*aside*). Who pricks you with his wit? There are heads wiser drunk than others sober.

YAJEHO. The frogs were dancing with the lizards in the moonlight, about a hag of the earth; she emptied her ladle upon them, and they turned into beautiful girls, but when they smiled you could see by their teeth that they all were the daughters of fiends.

BABOON. Umph-humph! Umph-humph! Umph-humph!

KIOWANA. Gluko, out with the freak and the baboon! (*GLUKO walks very deliberately to YAJEHO and the BABOON and carries them, one after the other, kicking and gibbering, out of the room, returning afterwards.*) I do not need your fee. (*Aside.*) In what contempt he holds me! With what contempt he would receive my love! My wand is broken, so I must use my tongue to charm him, and my tongue is weary, weary. And then those shadows—they unfix my thoughts. My spirit-masters never acted thus before. Why will they do so now? At one moment they seem to turn into faces I have known, and then they change again. How can I play a part before Uncertainty? Still, I must try to say a word. (*Aloud.*) Sylvador! (*Aside.*) Oh, I can not! My voice begins to falter; I am lost! (*Aloud.*) Sylvador! (*Aside.*) Weakness glides over me! I am tired, tired; would I were resting in his arms! O precious dream, that saves me from life's bitterness. Will it be ever realized? (*The room suddenly becomes entirely dark.*)

ACT III.

THE SAME.

(*The darkness has turned into a beautiful morning glow. Sweet strains of music float above and about. The shadowy figures are gone.*)

KIOWANA. The music of my dream! O Sylvador! And they have done this for me! They were not thankless as I

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thought they were. They showed you, did they not, how foolish was your love for her? How foolish thoughts of vengeance?

SYLVADOR. Foolish, perhaps, were my thoughts of vengeance. This music at least soothes my hate away. No, do not harm my rival in the least, or cause, if possible, my love to shed a tear; bring her unto me gently. For, under the spell of this angelic music, I think of days when I was nearer Heaven than now, and when my dreams had wings. (*Aside.*) Oh, did I but feel that she cared half so much for me as she dotes upon him, I would have been a better man, and not be wooing sin now.

KIOWANA. A dream from which let us never awaken, Sylvador! They have departed, those ugly shadows, after they at last gave us to one another. Let us flee far from them and from these scenes of hateful recollection. I have riches enough to feed our outward pleasures, and I will never exert my dark powers again, unless it be to make you happy. Come, Sylvador! (*She draws her arm about his neck.*) Do you not feel the breath of passion upon us, urging toward the feast of love? Even were I sure that we could have a thousand years of bliss together I would not lose a moment of it for the world.

GLUKO (*aside*). I do not understand the motive of her play, and I am not so very drunk either.

SYLVADOR. Whatever these reverie-melodies suggest to you they lure me to no mood for dalliance; they bear my thoughts, rather, skyward to innocent love, and bid me speed, with shame, from here, this witch's brothel! (*Thrusting her away from him.*)

KIOWANA. They bid me nestle in my lover's arms. That is what these chords of music say to me. (*The music ceases, and is followed by sobs.*) Love seems to weep that we are losing time in joining its revels. Come, Sylvador, let us at once away!

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SYLVADOR. Love seems to weep that I still loiter here. Away, indeed, but not away with you! The door is locked!—Sot, open it, I say! for I have done with vice and deviltry!

(Darkness again and wild laughter.)

KIOWANA. What do they mean? They can not take you from me, Sylvador! Quick! Quick! They plan a mischief—to rob us of each other; they have fastened the door, but there is an underground passage—O, I am dumb! He can not hear me! What hands force me back to my seat? O hell! hell! thankless, unrelenting hell, what a fool I was ever to have served you!

(The darkness gradually turns into a blue glimmer showing KIOWANA on her dais, with one of the shadowy figures on each side of her.)

FIRST SHADOW *(speaking with the voice of KIOWANA)*. Kneel, Sylvador, the farce is over. I sought but to test the strength of your love for her whom you call pure and holy. I have not been delaying with my occult work, for half of it is ended—with the little play which you considered real. The second, and the most important, part I now begin.

VOICE OF YAJEHO *(at the door)*. The death-bird called to the rain-ghost "I know of heart's-blood to wash away!" *(The baboon echoes, with almost a moan.)*

SECOND SHADOW *(with the voice of KIOWANA)*. Another word, and you dance on live coals!

KIOWANA *(aside)*. So it was all a dream—a cloud-fast passing dream! They have not yet begun to give him to me, and doubtless they never will. Delusion, precious delusion, why must I part with you? They use my voice; even Gluko thinks I am speaking. I can no more than witness their whim's pleasure, and their whim's pleasure is, I fear, to do me harm. And I can not utter a word, a word!

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SECOND SHADOW. You have spoken truly, Sylvador; human passions are nothing to me except as subjects for my caprice or gain; love and hate have unsettled your will-power, so I must use mine for you—mine that is always calm, always calm. But we must first thoroughly know the natures of those whose actions we wish to control. On these walls, at my demon-helped summons, the life of her whom you worship will appear. Draw aside the curtains, Gluko, hidden things must be exposed. (*GLUKO touches a secret spring, and the black velvet, covering the wall in front of the raised seat, is drawn aside, revealing a massive mirror.*)

SECOND SHADOW. Away with illusion, born of love! Away with distortion, wrought of hate! For truths no mortal dare deny now in mirror-parade pass by. Spirit friends of right and justice! Powers that frown on fraud and plottings! Hands that uncover smothered wrongs, the time for your aid has arrived! Manifest yourselves!

SYLVADOR (*casting away his staff and grasping, under his robe, his dagger*). Woman, take care, take care!

GLUKO (*aside*). Has she lost her clever senses? If sane, what is her game? (*Drawing nearer to Sylvador.*)

KIOWANA. I see their plot's end now; they'll have him kill me; and he can never know that I am guiltless! At last I have you, faces! Roderic's and Eldero's! To taunt me thus is folly. What care I for having murdered them! And yet I do regret my terminating their careers, since I was pleasing you when I did so. O, your triumphant leers! As though you were the ghosts of those two wretches, whom I pity now, returned here for revenge!

FIRST SHADOW. Put back your dagger, fool, and kneel for pardon from scowling immortals. It is no human hands that guide these awful moments; you breathe the sultry air of ready fate and vengeance! You winged sympathies, mysterious wanderers that drift unseen upon the sighs of wronged hearts, through all the worlds of Chance and

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Change, in quest of opportunity to comfort or redress, fulfill your mission now ! Inspire this work to triumph and to end !

ELEMENTARY SPIRIT VOICES. Behold ! our help is given. We fluttering sympathies of the air were here before you called us ; we never fail when needed, as fleshly sympathies fail.

(The room becomes gradually filled with elementary shapes.)

KIOWANA *(aside)*. The entire spirit-world has come to witness a mortal's downfall !

GLUKO *(aside)*. The Devil himself will be here next, I suppose ; his court seems to be rapidly assembling. *(Drinks.)*

SECOND SHADOW. Look into the mirror, Sylvador. The cause of your unsettled brain, the wine that drunkened your career, and made you reel with foolish dreams, when steady purpose should have been your aim—arises in all the glory of its disturbing charms—Woman—who gives no rest even to the dead, but lures shades from their flight through the ethereal worlds, to aid rewarding or avenging fates to bless or hurl her down, down, down ! Prostrate yourself before her, for it is Woman that turns the entire universe into melodious or tormenting noise. *(The likeness of a beautiful girl appears in the mirror, reclining musingly on a couch. Meanwhile the two shadows move slowly away from their stations by the raised seat, until they stand between SYLVADOR and GLUKO. They look with malignant triumph all the time at KIOWANA, who quivers convulsively.)*

GLUKO. I do not like this chilly company much. You are a little warmer, are you not, my goblet ? You would not be so impolite, I know, as they who bar my curiosity just when the play becomes most interesting. Ho, ho ! they do still more than stand discourteously in front of me ; they cast a sluggish spell upon my limbs ! I can not move my

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legs, and, what is worse, I can not move my arm to take a drink. A nightmare revelry, indeed ! I would not be a part of it again for all the amorous priestesses of Hell. What, not allowed to drink? Misfortune never spat on me till now !

SYLVADOR. Are you a dream, Norine? a madman's fancy, dear? longing for my own better self deranged? Whatever you may be, vision or witchery, something divine sends you here to let me say ten thousand times and more, I worship you, bright, only star of my life's dark way, that leads me upward to a higher world of thought than this earth gives to the wild chaos of my brain ! Even though you be but a glorious delusion, sprung from the frenzy of my tormented hope, or else the triumph of forbidden wisdom—I pray to you, likeness of her I love ; I pray to you, Norine, as to a goddess who, frowning on her subject, strikes him mad ; the air grows black around him and, groping in the darkness, he stumbles upon folly and deep sin. I pray to you, divested of my folly (*casting off his coronet and robe*). I pray to you with curses on my sins. I thank you for your well intended service (*throwing a purse into KIOWANA's lap*) ; here is your fee, priestess ; I need your help no more. My truth shall be my only charm, Norine, to win at least a smile from your sweet lips ; my breast's confession shall be my sole wand that forces you at last to look upon me. You do not know that you alone are my salvation ; you do not know that you are my eternity ; for, if you knew, you could not help but love me. Norine, you do not understand my words, so frail and quivering with my anguish—my acts so strange from feverish hunger ; for I am starving, cold, blind, weak, and helpless from lack of you, my food, warmth, sight, and rest ! I would not harm a weed that cared for you, Norine ; for all things that exist should kneel to you. But how can I refrain from hating him that dares to steal my soul from me? Norine, I ask for justice, nothing more ; and justice is that you belong

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to me. He gained your love through trickery ; for how can you be the soul of two men? Accept your own, O soul ! Return unto your Kingdom, which is in fierce disorder without your guiding hand. Its sovereign reigns absolutely; its sovereign is its only creed ; its sovereign is its only light. Bereft of its sovereign, tempestuous night holds ceaseless sway. Is it not natural to war against another kingdom that has lured this sovereign away? Is it not natural to use the same means to win back, as were employed to dispossess? Sword to match sword; scheme to meet scheme; magic against magic ; for an angel's heart. But see, I hurl aside my sword and anger ! And see, I drop, with shame, cold plots and devil's aid ! I stand with my whole being unconcealed, without a plea or weapon. Look me through and through ! Recognize your Kingdom, sovereign soul, shattered by loss of you !

(The figure in the glass smiles and stretches forth her arms.)

Norine, at last you recognize your own ! The dead begins to live in the hope of that chaste smile. Norine, let me but breathe to give you joy !

(The forms of men appear, one after the other, on the mirror, and each is in turn embraced and caressed by the image of the girl.) Norine, forgive ! it is not I. Some strange perversion captures me ! Insanity has usurped my reason ! It is not I who thus offends ! O cursed brain—I will tear it out ! That it, though mad, should think of you in an unholy manner ! you, the purest ray of heaven that illumines the shadows below ! My death alone can atone for this, Norine ! I will crush forever the momentary haunt of a diseased spirit, that dares to wrong my soul ! *(Drawing his dagger and pointing it against his breast.)* The home of my true self that worships you, Norine, has been invaded by unhealthy things that commit sacrilege upon its sacred altar. See, I destroy that profaned temple with its polluters, in horror that I once dwelt therein !

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FIRST SHADOW (*speaking with the voice of KIWANA*).
Ha, ha! Death! death!—the fate of woman's fool! Death,
death!

SYLVADOR. O no, this temple is not profaned, I am
guiltless entirely of this damnable crime! Hear, hear! it is
this reptile's bite—she, slave to vileness, hates the pure!
Pardon, Norine, my wrong to you in giving this worm a
chance to crawl upon and slime your saintly name.
Blasphemous hag, die! die! (*Stabbing KIWANA.*) At last
fate smiles on me, Norine, since it permits me to avenge an
insult to my soul.

KIWANA (*aside*). Fiends, you have lost! To die by
the hand of him I love is not a punishment but a joy!

SHADOWS (*moving away from GLUKO to the mirror and
speaking with their own voices*). Draw down the curtains,
Gluko; the Comedy of Justice is over, and ends in tragedy.

GLUKO. They call me sot, but I'm not drunk; for if I
were I should understand the meaning of this mystery which
turns me into a puppet and a part of the show! Well, I am
glad that you are gone; you are not sociable at all. What
about drawing the curtains down? You can do it more quickly
yourselves. (*The curtains again slowly cover the mirror.*)

So, you let me use my limbs again? And here is still a
drop in the cup. I will swallow it and grow wiser, perhaps,
and learn what is going on. I fell into something of a doze,
but I heard the scuffle of quarreling words. It must have
been a true love's brawl since it ends, like such brawls, in
sleepy peace. Ho, ho! no wonder we are asleep! I'd be
quiet too, with a hole in my breast—unless I could mate it
with a similar hole—and my own blood soaking the floor!
What, priestess, you did not do this yourself? You can not
speak, mistress? You are surely dead! You were not
always polite to me, and I was not mild as a servant should
be, but you lent me the pleasure once of your charms, if but
for a passing hour or more, and even though Gluko be only

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a sot, drink never suggested that he should forget that the woman who gave him a moment's delight had a claim to the protection of his sword. So I must have a word with you, sir fool by the name of Sylvador. Are you to blame for this red mess? If you are, I must make it a little redder still.

SYLVADOR. I have no blade to waste on you; you were only this wanton's tool.

GLUKO. Wanton though she was, she loved you, fool, and for that you owed her some consideration.

SYLVADOR. Do not call decayed feelings love. Hand me the key to unlock this door. I am in no mood to trifle with a wanton's cur!

GLUKO. But the cur means to trifle with the woman-killer. Fastidious murderer, draw!

SYLVADOR. Must you have it then? I will soil your gay coat with a mixture of swine's and ass's blood! (*They fight.*)

GLUKO. Drink against sobriety—let us see which wins! (SYLVADOR *falls.*) Drink wins, as it always does if you only take enough.

SYLVADOR. Norine, though I die in a haunt of shame, my thoughts to the last were of pure love for you. (*Dies.*)

SHADOWS. Our work is done. Kiowana, farewell! By this time you know that the dead can avenge.

KIOWANA (*aloud*). I can speak when it is too late. I thank you, Gluko. There is hope for me in dying with him who loved so faithfully. I intended to kill you this very night; take all my wealth, Gluko, and flee far from here. But do me one favor before you go; assist me to his body. (GLUKO *carries her to SYLVADOR's corpse.*) Fiends, I defy you! (*Falls upon the body.*)

SHADOWS. We are not fiends; but though you abandoned your service to Hell you could not avoid its results. Still, you had your opportunity to escape; before the voice of Music, Heaven's priest, even we, Revenge, departed.

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KIOWANA. I understand all now and can not hate you, shadows of my wronged attendants—Roderic, Eldero—but your revenge has failed! My love for him saves me from being damned!

SHADOWS. We will see when we meet below. (*All the shadows in the room disappear.*)

(*The door swings open; shouts of "Down with the witch and the witch's crew!" are heard in the building, together with the crash of falling doors.*)

(*Enter YAJEHO, with the baboon in his arms, frantically gesticulating and chattering.*)

YAJEHO. They break down the house!—so many angry people! They cry "Kill Kiowana!" O, where can we hide?

GLUKO (*fastening the door with heavy chains hanging on either side of the wall*). We will make them a little angrier still before they get us, Yajehe!

KIOWANA. Listen to me, Yajehe: There is a trap-door behind my chair—it leads down to a passage to the sea—forget this place—earn an honest living in another land—take the trumpet of Gluko—you play well—follow music and you never can be lost! (*GLUKO opens the trap-door and assists YAJEHO and the baboon to descend through the opening; he then closes it again.*) Has he gone, Gluko?

GLUKO. Gone, with the trumpet and baboon.

KIOWANA. Snatch the jewels off my fingers and fly, too!

(*The same sweet strains of music which floated through the room before, hover again above and about.*)

GLUKO. I want to listen to this music first.

KIOWANA. Saved! Saved! The voice of Music calls! All the shadows flee away from you, Music! This time you will not have to weep for me! I follow you to the soul of Sylvador! (*Dies.*)

(*The music changes into a rhapsody and ends in a glorious crash of triumph.*)

K i o w a n a

GLUKO (*picking up his goblet*). My cup is empty—the music has stopped. Old Death might as well have me now. (*Stabs himself.*) Come in! Come in! You'll get nothing but bones! (*The mob beats and howls at the door "Kill KIWANA! Kill all the witch's crew!"*) I'd like to be able to see your surprise. My last sight of life is its folly! (*Dies.*)

ISA.

A Village Church-yard. The moonlight shows Isa standing by a tomb along the burial-way.

ISA. This is the night they say the dead arise and march along the burial-way, in memory of the moments when their bodies last saw life. Would he but come—but come!

THE WINDS. You are with us, mournful mortal, finding rest in restlessness.

ISA. Rest? Rest in hope of death's forgiveness! Rest in the dream that he will pardon me! Who are you, voices of deep sympathy, that know my heart yet do not hate me?

THE WINDS. The winds float through the worlds of Life and Death; they thus can pity but never hate.

ISA. But ah, those voices in the distance! are they still yours? Winds, tell me, are they yours? Warm, trembling hope glides through my breast, so long cold with despair; for these are surely human voices, raised in martial ecstasy! But they do not reply. The winds have fled from me.

THE WINDS. Unrest must flee from Certainty; we will return, but never more to you.

ISA. Are shadows Certainty? I know the dead are coming, yet have no fear at all; they bring a hope the living could not bring.

VOICES OF APPROACHING SPIRITS, SINGING. Life, thou precious play of error! wildest dream of all eternity! Thee we worship, once so real! In death's light we still love life's night!

(Two by two, in slow procession figures pass the lonely woman. But she looks at none of them, till two aged forms approach, who stretch forth their pale arms toward her.)

THE AGED FORMS (*standing still*). Isa, our daughter, do not so distress yourself! Claude has forgiven you—Claude understands.

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ISA. Father!—mother! does he come, too? Father—mother! where is he?

FIRST FORM. See! your husband walks behind us, he, —alone—solitary of all this procession,—waiting for the empty space at his side to be filled with his companion shade.

SECOND FORM. Can you not forgive yourself, Isa, for being a victim to the frenzy of dogma? The dead know all, and do not censure; the dead are troubled only by the grief of the living.

(Without replying, Isa casts herself before a tall spirit advancing alone.)

ISA. Claude, forgive your wife her folly in casting off Love, the perfect truth, for the sake of Creed, the artificial.

SPIRIT OF CLAUDE. As you never have been faithless to your love and wifely duties, cease lamenting over an error sprung from the shadows of a mistaken world. As soon as I was freed from the flesh, sanity's prison, I understood and pitied the delusion of mortals, the maddest revel of which is religious bigotry. How death laughs at creeds, whose insane power ends with one short earthly life! Isa, dear, the only pain you can give me is your self-reproach for moments that were not guilty, but sick. Think of the coming hour that unites us forever, when we shall look on our separation as a strange scene of a fantastic play. *(Moving on.)*

ISA. And do you think that I can leave you, after your forgiveness, Claude? The day of hope has fallen on me; shall I turn from it to the night of despair? That hour is here—that hour, my husband, which awakens us forever from ill-dreams of divided love!

(Springing into the space at CLAUDE'S side. The procession moves on, singing, until it is lost to sight.)

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SONG OF THE SPIRITS. Death, we worship thee! Death, we return to thee, pitying friend of troubled hearts! O thou who unitest divided love, take us back from the sorrows of Life!

(The light of dawn slowly appears.)

THE WINDS. Death has gone, and Life is here, so now the winds can moan again. Enter, blindness and mistake, ministers to flesh and breath.

(Enter SEXTON.)

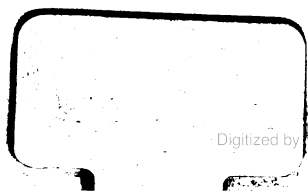
SEXTON. I wonder if they marched last night, as people say they do? I kept my shutters tightly closed; I'd much rather bury than be buried myself, and who sees the dead walk must soon die.—What's this?—I wish I had not come! There may be ghosts straggling about here still—a woman! dead, on the burial-way! By the tongue of my wife, it is Isa! Poor wench! she surely was out of her head, or she would not have dared to meet the dead! I buried her husband a year ago—she grieved herself sick and mad, they say; and simply because they quarreled about church she imagined she had broken his heart. So young and so pretty! She must have been mad! for even had she broken his heart, as she raved, remorse could not patch it together again. Better had she comforted herself with another heart. Remorse brings but work for my spade.

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